

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 16073 01 OF 02 171103Z
ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 FAA-00 DOTE-00 MCT-01 /078 W
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R 170927Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2042
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 16073/01

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: JA EAIR PINR
SUBJECT: JAPANESE FOLLOW-UP ON HIJACKING

SUMMARY: POPULAR EXCITEMENT OVER JAPANESE RED ARMY (JRA)
HIJACKING -- REFLECTED IN DEBATE OVER WISDOM OF GOVERNMENT'S
HANDLING OF INCIDENT IN MEDIA COMMENTARY AND DIET
INTERPELLATIONS--IS EBBING RAPIDLY. GOJ HAS BEGUN TO CONSIDER
TECHNICAL MEASURES TO COUNTER FUTURE TERRORIST ATTEMPTS, BUT
IS UNLIKELY TO CHANGE BASIC POLICY IN DEALING WITH TERRORISTS.
END SUMMARY

1. IN DAYS FOLLOWING CONCLUSION IN ALGIERS OF JRA'S
SUCCESSFUL HIJACKING MEDIA CONTINUED TO REVIEW VARIOUS
ASPECTS OF INCIDENT WITH SOME CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT'S
RESPONSE TO TERRORIST DEMANDS. IN LINE WITH JAPANESE
PREOCCUPATION WITH HOW WORLD VIEWS THEM, PRESS REPLAYED
VARIOUS ARTICLES CONDEMNING JAPAN'S "SOFT LINE" ON
TERRORISTS; ASAHI EDITORIAL, FOR INSTANCE, CHARGED
THAT INCIDENT HAD LOWERED JAPAN'S DIPLOMATIC STATUS IN
WORLD.

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PAGE 02 TOKYO 16073 01 OF 02 171103Z

2. DIET IN TURN OPENED ON HEELS OF INCIDENT AND FOR
SEVERAL DAYS, HIJACKING WAS MAJOR TOPIC OF NATIONALLY-
TELEVISED INTERPELLATIONS. OPPOSITION MEMBERS FROM JSP,
CGP, DSP AND NLC TOOK GOVERNMENT TO TASK FOR ITS HANDLING
OF HIJACKING AND ITS INABILITY TO PROTECT JAPANESE AND
OTHER CITIZENS IN FUTURE INCIDENTS. SIMILAR LINE WAS ALSO

TAKEN BY BUNSEI SATO OF LDP IN LENGTHY QUESTIONING. PM FUKUDA AND OTHER MINISTERS TRIED, FOR MOST PART SUCCESSFULLY, TO CONVEY IN THEIR REPLIES SINCERITY OF THEIR CONCERN FOR PREVENTION OF FUTURE HIJACKS, AND CURRENT SESSION IS--TO CONSIDER BILL TIGHTENING JAPANESE AIR SECURITY MEASURES. DESPITE OCCASIONAL AWKWARD MOMENTS, GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO HAVE WEATHERED INCIDENT WITHOUT SERIOUS DAMAGE, AND CONTROVERSY OVER CABINET'S HANDLING OF JRA HIJACKING HAS LARGELY DIED DOWN.

3. ON DIPLOMATIC FRONT, GOJ HAS APPARENTLY DROPPED ATTEMPTS TO GAIN RETURN OF JRA HIJACKERS AND RELEASED PRISONERS FROM ALGERIA. WHEN QUESTIONED BY PRESS ON ALGERIAN REJECTION OF GOJ'S "HOPE" THAT HIJACKERS WOULD BE SENT BACK TO JAPAN, CHIEF CABINET SECRETARY SONODA NOTED ONLY: "WE FULLY UNDERSTAND THE ALGERIAN POSITION; IT IS HARD FOR ME TO SAY WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL DO IN RESPONSE..." MEMBER OF FONOFF VICE MINISTER'S STAFF INFORMED EMBOFF THAT ALTHOUGH GOJ HAD NOT ENTIRELY GIVEN UP, IT WAS UNLIKELY AMBASSADOR MIYAZAKI IN ALGIERS WOULD BE INSTRUCTED TO CONTINUE PRESSING ON ISSUE.

4. IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING INCIDENT, CABINET ESTABLISHED SPECIAL HIJACK COUNTERMEASURES WORKING GROUP OF CONCERNED MINISTRIES TO CONSIDER METHODS OF PREVENTING SUCH INCIDENTS IN FUTURE. AS ANNOUNCED TO PRESS, GUIDING POLICIES OF CABINET WORKING GROUP WOULD BE TO: 1) SEEK CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 TOKYO 16073 01 OF 02 171103Z

ELIMINATION OF JRA AS THREAT; 2) INCREASE DOMESTIC ANTI-HIJACK PREVENTION MEASURES; AND 3) SUPPORT INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN COMBATTING HIJACKING. ACCORDING TO FONOFF WORKING-LEVEL PARTICIPANT (1ST CONSULAR DEPDIR HAYASHI) GROUP HAS THUS FAR FOCUSED ON TECHNICAL MEASURES.

5. IN CONJUNCTION WITH JAL, FOR INSTANCE, COUNTERMEASURES GROUP HAS DECIDED TO RECOMMEND TIGHTER RESTRICTIONS ON HAND LIGGAGE ALLOWED ON PLANES, STATIONING OF AIRLINE SECURITY OFFICERS IN JAL REGIONAL OFFICES OVERSEAS, AND CLOSER OBSERVATION OF LOCAL MAINTENANCE AND CATERING PERSONNEL AT FOREIGN AIRPORTS. (ON LATER POINT, HAYASHI NOTED INCREASED SUSPICION ON PART OF SOME GOJ OFFICIALS THAT DURING PAST TWO YEARS OF APPARENT INACTIVITY, JRA HAD SOMEHOW MANAGED TO SUBORN LOCAL PERSONNEL AT SOUTH ASIAN AIRPORTS.) PROPOSAL TO PLACE SECURITY PERSONNEL ON JAL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS HAS NOT YET BEEN DECIDED UPON.

6. COUNTERMEASURES GROUP HAS ALSO APPARENTLY AGREED ON NEED FOR INCREASED SURVEILLANCE OF SUSPECTED JRA

SYMPATHIZERS AND POTENTIAL RECRUITS WITHIN JAPAN.
DURING PAST FEW DAYS, JAPANESE POLICE HAVE CONDUCTED
SERIES OF WELL-PUBLICIZED SEARCHES OF HOMES OF RELEASED
PRISONERS AND OFFICES OF SMALL FAR-LEFT ORGANIZATIONS
AND MAGAZINES. HAYASHI NOTED THAT IN THIS CONNECTION,
GOJ WAS CONSIDERING TIGHTER PASSPORT AND IMMIGRATION
CONTROLS WITH EYE TOWARD PREVENTING TRAVEL OF SUSPECTED
JRA SUPPORTERS IN AND OUT OF JAPAN.

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PAGE 01 TOKYO 16073 02 OF 02 171114Z
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INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 16073/02

7. HAYASHI SAID COUNTERMEASURES GROUP HAD NOT YET
ADDRESSED DETAILS OF INCREASED INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
BEYOND GENERAL AGREEMENT ON POSSIBILITY OF GREATER
EXCHANGE OF INTELLIGENCE ON TERRORISTS THROUGH
INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL POLICE ORGANIZATION (ICPO) AND
DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES TO OBTAIN WIDER ADHERENCE TO
EXISTING ANTI-HIJACK CONVENTIONS.

8. COUNTERMEASURES GROUP IS EXPECTED TO PRESENT FULL
SET OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET BY EARLY NOVEMBER.
ALTHOUGH GOJ OFFICIALS ARE WATCHING CLOSELY HOW WEST
GERMANS HANDLE CURRENT LUFTHANSA HIJACKING, THERE ARE
THUS FAR NO INDICATIONS THAT GROUP WILL SUGGEST ANY
CHANGE IN GOJ'S PATTERN OF RESPONSE, DEMONSTRATED IN
1975 KUALA LUMPUR INCIDENT AND MOST RECENT HIJACKING,
OF ACCEDING TO TERRORIST DEMANDS WHEN FACED WITH
POSSIBILITY OF EXECUTION OF LARGE NUMBER OF HOSTAGES
-- PARTICULARLY FOREIGNERS. BOTH FONOFF OFFICIALS AND

JOURNALISTS HAVE NOTED TO EMBOFF THAT ALTHOUGH SOME IN
BUREAUCRACY, PARTICULARLY JUSTICE MINISTRY, HAD
URGED THAT GOJ ADOPT A TOUGH LINE -- "LIKE THAT OF USG"--
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PAGE 02 TOKYO 16073 02 OF 02 171114Z

CABINET LEADERSHIP WOULD BE MOST UNLIKELY TO COMMIT
ITSELF UNEQUIVOCALLY TO SUCH POLICY IN THE ABSTRACT.
GOJ RESPONSE TO FUTURE INCIDENTS, THEY GENERALLY AGREED,
WOULD BE SHAPED BY NATURE OF INDIVIDUAL SITUATION AND
WOULD CONTINUE TO BE GUIDED ABOVE ALL ELSE BY PERCEIVED
NEED TO PRESERVE HUMAN LIFE.
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Message Attributes

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